

Kirby Family Farm Special Exception Request

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Daryl Kirby, representing Kirby Family Farm Inc., a nonprofit educational organization serving families in Levy County.

Written statement for Special Exception Request

Property: Parcel ID 051110020A, Levy County, FL

Current Zoning: R-1

Requested Special Exception Request: Civic/Community Use under Sec. 50-760

1. The reason why said exception(s) should be approved: The subject property is currently designated as R-1 Zoning. While this designation allows certain activities, zoning may not explicitly permit the full scope of Kirby Family Farm's operations and mission. Under this zoning, a special exception permit is allowed if approved. Kirby Family Farm, Inc. is requesting a Special Exemption under the R-1 Residential District pursuant to Levy County Land Development Code Sections 50-760 to allow civic/community uses on the property.

This request will allow Kirby Family Farm to continue providing vital support, resources, and community services in compliance with County regulations.

Kirby Family Farm is a nonprofit organization that provides enrichment, civic/community services, agricultural and historic experiences, life-skills training, mentorships, and other programs that serve youth and families throughout Levy County and surrounding areas. These services are community-oriented and are consistent with the intent of allowing civic and community use through the Special Exception process. Approving this Special Exception will allow Kirby Family Farm to continue offering their services and community programs in compliance with the standards established in the Levy County Land Development Code listed above. The organization will continue to comply with all applicable County regulations as it has since 2011.

2. Any public purpose that the Special Exception Request would serve:

The Special Exception Request serves the public by allowing Kirby Family Farm's 501c(3) nonprofit current mission and operations to continue which are organized for religious, charitable, scientific, literary, and educational purposes under Section 501c (3). By continuing the operations and missions it supports:

- **Filling a Critical Need:** Providing support and enrichment in a rural county where resources are limited and 20% of Levy County's residents are under the age of 18.
- **Supporting Youth and Families:** Offering free support, resources, and programs for young people and their families, including at risk, special needs, medically challenged, and foster youth. This is important when 24.1% of Levy County residents under 18 live below the poverty line.
- **Strengthening the Community:** We promote history, promote agriculture experiences, and create volunteer opportunities.
- **Driving Economic Impact:** Supports tourism and local economic impact by drawing visitors and financial revenue to local businesses.

- **Enables Kirby Family Farm to continue:** to maintain already established programs, operate and grow responsibly as a positive community resource enriching the lives of its citizens.

3. How the proposed exception request is applicable County-wide in lieu of addressing a singular parcel or incident:

This request supports Levy County's long-term goal of providing community and civic opportunities for its residents while preserving the rural character of the community.

Civic and community services are valuable resources that benefit families throughout the county, particularly in rural areas where access to these services may be limited. Granting this Special Exception demonstrates how nonprofit organizations can successfully operate in residential districts when and if they are compatible with surrounding properties and comply with Levy County Development standards. This approach encourages community enrichment centers and agencies, agricultural and historic experiences, youth training and development, and community engagement without requiring changes to the underlying zoning. The support this shows for county residents is significant and substantial.

The approval of this Special Exception is not intended to benefit only one parcel but rather supports the County's broader vision of allowing community serving entities to enhance the quality of life for its residents throughout Levy County while protecting the character of residential neighborhoods.

4. How the proposed exception is consistent with the intent and purpose of the Levy County Comprehensive Plan: The proposed Special Exception Request is consistent with the following elements of the Levy County Comprehensive Plan. The Plan encourages preserving rural character, protecting historic resources, supporting educational opportunities, and making better the quality of lives for its residents. Kirby Family Farm embodies those goals every day.

- **Economic Element Goal and (Objective 1):** "Promotes the growth of a strong, stable and prosperous economy". This is achieved by recognizing the consistent economic impact generated by Kirby Family Farm's ongoing operations since its opening in 2011. *(As worded in the plan)* "Develop strategies and support programs that promote diversified enhanced educational and training opportunities and support existing businesses."
- **Future Land Use Element (Objective 7, Policy 7.5) "Historic resources shall be protected by designation as historic sites by the State or the County."** This requested Special Exception is consistent by supporting the preservation, appreciation and education of Levy County's historic resources. On May 16, 2025, Kirby Family Farm's Historic Train Depot was officially recognized by the State of Florida Historical Registry. The site is also home to the largest intact display in the world, of the Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus Train, also recognized by the State of Florida's Historical Registry.
- **Rural Character: Because Kirby Family Farm preserves open space and agricultural land** while providing community enrichment and civic activities that are compatible with neighboring properties. The location is perfectly placed. The western

boarder is 100 feet from the middle-high school. The entrance shares a corner with the elementary school. The eastern border, over three quarters of a mile, completely borders an active railroad and industrial zoned property. Its location preserves the "rural quality of life" and does not place undue strain on county services or the environment.

5. Statistics, studies, background data, and/or analysis in support of the Specific Exception Request and how it will be enforced.

- **Demand:** Data shows the proven success of Kirby Family Farm's civic and economic impacts since 2011.
- **Traffic Impact:** Kirby Family Farm has demonstrated success continuously in handling traffic patterns since 2011.
- **Enforcement:** This project will be enforced through Levy County's Site Plan Review process. Per LDC section 50-768, Lot Cover Regulations state; Maximum impervious coverage expressed as a percentage of the lot size R-1 10 acres or greater = 10%. All existing structures meet R-1 setback requirements. All future structures will meet R-1 setback requirements.

Proven Success Since 2011

Community Impact 15 years of providing programs and services that strengthen families and supports local education.	Economic Benefit Events and programs generate visitors and revenue that support local businesses and Levy County's economy.	Educational Value Unique Hands-on agriculture and historic preservation, life skills training and development for youth and families.	Responsible Operation A track record of safe well-managed events and programs with minimal impact on neighbors and resources.
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Sincerely,

Daryl Kirby